



Metropolitan King County Council

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January 10, 2006

James J. O'Neil
Asst. Vice President
Corporate Real Estate Development
BNSF Railway Company
P.O. Box 961050
Fort Worth, TX 76161-0050

Dear Mr. O'Neil:

As you know, King County is currently negotiating with Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway Company to purchase the 47 mile eastside rail corridor. We intend to use the corridor for a public trail with mixed uses, including Rails with Trails.

We are writing to urge a prompt extension of the lease agreement between BNSF and one of your commercial users, The Spirit of Washington Dinner Train.

The King County Council and King County Executive have repeatedly expressed their support for the Dinner Train. This was evidenced by a unanimous motion passed by the Council in July of 2005. A copy of this motion is attached for your review.

As you know, the current lease for the Dinner Train expires in November of 2006 and it is our understanding that you are having discussions with them, but have yet to extend or develop a new lease. Uncertainty is difficult for any business, but it is particularly hard on the Dinner Train as so many customers book their trips far in advance and give gift certificates for future rides.

In addition, hundreds of charity and community groups avail themselves of the generosity of the Dinner Train and use trips donated by the Dinner Train to raise funds for good causes throughout the county. Without a lease extension, the Dinner Train is unable to grant the hundreds of requests for donations.

We are excited by the prospect of successful negotiations leading to County ownership of this important corridor. We are concerned, however, that the lack of certainty for the current users on the line will harm our ability to come to a mutually acceptable conclusion.

We urge you to extend the Dinner Train lease as soon as possible so that this important community asset can continue to operate and we can move forward with our negotiations.

Sincerely,



Larry Phillips
Chair, King County Council



Bob Ferguson
King County Council, District 1



Kathy Lambert
King County Council, District 3



Julia Patterson
King County Council, District 5



Jane Hague
King County Council, District 6



Pete von Reichbauer
King County Council, District 7



Dow Constantine
King County Council, District 8



Reagan Dunn
King County Council, District 9

cc: King County Councilmembers
Rod Brandon
Eric Temple
Lynn Claudon